



Michael Lane, Vineyard Manager

Michael Lane has devoted the last eight years of his life to the Yangarra Estate vineyards and their surrounds.

In that time, he has walked every row with winemaker Peter Fraser, scouring the vineyards for every minor change in aspect, gradient, soil type, altitude, shelter and flavour. And that's not just the flavour of the grapes. These blokes taste the soil. They know every tiny fluctuation in those precious sands.

For a man who's tireless in his campaign to reduce unnecessary applications of any chemical, Michael came from a handy background, having worked for many years as an expert consultant in pest management. If he can achieve a desired result using nature to manage and mend itself, that's what he'll do.

Michael intimately understands the growth patterns and flavours of each block on Yangarra, even discerning minute changes within the blocks. He knows how to tickle each section however delicately, ensuring it grows precisely the type of world class fruit that Peter needs for the Yangarra Estate wines.

Together, this duo regularly tastes batches of wine from every individual sector of the vineyards, relating their flavours to the soils and vine management. No tiny detail is overlooked: minute emphasis is placed on the pruning levels and bud placement of each flavour block, canopy management, shoot thinning and shoot placement as well as exact timing and volume if the vines require supplementary watering or delicate nutritional inputs.

While being completely fluent in the latest technologies and tools for monitoring soil moisture, grape maturity, irrigation and weather conditions, Michael's more likely to be found with a long-handled shovel in his hand, gazing across his vineyards with the thousand-yard stare, or lost in the canopy somewhere, searching for something elusive, or simply pondering the sands like they were made up of billions of priceless jewels.

Michael is currently busy overseeing the new 100 acre section of bush vines, while patiently learning the personalities of his younger blocks of Roussanne and Viognier.

He is revered in McLaren Vale for his drive and knowledge of revegetation issues as much as his canny grasp of the mysteries of viticulture. He's the chairman of the local viticulture council, and was a finalist in the 2007 McLaren Vale Viticulturer of the Year Award for the consistent intelligence he applies to grow Yangarra's world class fruit as much as for his contribution to the environment with the re-vegetation of Yangarra Estate's creeklines and fauna corridors.

Michael's demeanour shows he simply loves his job and relishes every moment he spends on Yangarra Estate. And he exudes the confident air of a fellow who focuses nearly every waking moment pondering on what this whole thing is all about: producing a delicious, wholesome, utterly memorable glass of wine. Or six.